

Staff Report



Community Services Department

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REPORT TO: Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 3, 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Mark Hildebrand, Director Neighbourhood Programs and Services,
519-741-2200 ext.7687

PREPARED BY: Steve Roth, Manager Community Centres, 519-741-2200 ext. 7077

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All

DATE OF REPORT: March 8, 2023

REPORT NO.: CSD-2022-422

SUBJECT: Mill Courtland Community Centre Expansion Business Case

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mill Courtland Community Centre (MCCC) business case, as attached to Community Services Department report CSD-2022-422, be received for information and staff be directed to move to the Detailed Design Phase of the centre expansion project.

BACKGROUND:

The Mill Courtland Community Centre (MCCC) is located at 216 Mill Street in Kitchener. It is one of the City's smaller community centres at 8,704 square feet. The small building envelope and overall site footprint is insufficient when contrasted to the large number of supportive services and dynamic programs delivered at the site.

Since 1986, MCCC has been a centre which has modeled a unique grass roots approach which focuses on the community's capacities and proven community development practices which has led to several partnerships. These relationships have been fostered through the dedicated efforts of three associations, their volunteers and highly skilled community centre staff. These associations are: Mill Courtland Neighbourhood Association (MCNA), Highland-Stirling Community Group (HSCG) and Cedar Hill Community Group (CHCG).

The City's commitment to this project is in the public domain with funds currently allotted in the 2023 capital budget. An expansion to the Mill Courtland Community Centre was recommended in the 2005 Leisure Facilities Master Plan and has been delayed several times based on competing funding needs.

REPORT:

Business Case Development Phase

When staff plan on building a stand-alone community centre or complete a substantial expansion and renovation to an existing community centre, a comprehensive business case is completed. Led by a project team including staff and Neighbourhood Association representation, the intent of the business case is to conduct a thorough needs assessment through the implementation of community consultations, including engagement with groups such as neighbourhood associations, stakeholders, equity deserving groups, staff and other social service agencies and

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partners who may operate out of the facilities from time to time. Through the business case, a number of community priorities are brought forward for consideration, in relation to the utilization of indoor and outdoor spaces at the Centre. Accompanying the engagement with the community and staff, usage data, demographics and trends (local to national) are also analysed to get a comprehensive picture of all the possible elements that could be considered.

It is often the case that not all elements can be included in a facility build or expansion, giving consideration to the size and configuration of the lot where the facility is, budget, etc. It is therefore necessary to identify critical and priority elements from the business case which are deemed necessary and that fit within the allotted construction budget. For the MCCC expansion, critical components will be further defined by the project team in the detailed design phase (explained more fully below).

The attached MCCC expansion business case, lead by award-winning placemaking specialist Jay Pitter and developed by the project team, contains a comprehensive review and analysis of the current needs of the surrounding community and capacities of the MCCC, based primarily on existing services, current demographic profiles, trends and projected population and household numbers.

MCCC Business Case Summary:

i) Space and Usage

The current facility includes a single gymnasium, a kitchen, two multi-purpose rooms, a craft room, children's program room supported by two Neighbourhood Association offices and an office for community centre staff. Almost 20 years ago, an outdoor portable space was added to accommodate the growing programming needs on the site. A cob oven, numerous gardens and ping pong table highlight some of the popular outdoor amenities at this site. The Neighbourhood Associations offer recreation programming at the facility four seasons a year. The Centre leads programs in collaboration with organizations such as SHORE, House of Friendship, African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region and Community Support Connections to name a few.

ii) Demonstrated Need

The contents of the attached MCCC business case supports the proposed upgrades and renovation to the community centre. Rapid neighbourhood growth, specifically within the Centre's neighbourhood boundaries, suggests that expanding both internal and external spaces is a pressing requirement. The Mill Courtland neighbourhood is projected to grow by 37% by 2041, outpacing the growth rate of the City of Kitchener, which is projected to grow by 24% during the same period. While an emphasis has been placed on the expansion of the building envelope, the entire site program must be optimized.

iii) Proposed Facility Upgrades and Renovation

The business case highlights several priorities for the facility considering the needs identified by the public and stakeholders, and budget limitations. The priorities are categorized into five areas listed below:

Exterior Front and Side:

- A protected pedestrian walkway to increase safety when accessing back green space along the side of the building that currently connects the front and back parking lots.

- All-season design interventions centring covered, flexible space that can be heated to facilitate activities such as community markets, clothing giveaway programs and the 'foot hut' located at the front of the centre.

Exterior Back:

- Replace the current portable with a flexible, single storey multi-use building envelope extension.
- Add a covering to the building extension and central gathering area with seating to create a more comfortable outdoor programming environment.

Interior:

- Open the space between the front and back of the Centre to increase safety by improving interior sight lines and overall connectivity.
- Widen the corridor adjacent to the restrooms and the kitchen to create accessibility – addressing physical accessibility is paramount through out entire building envelope.

Accessibility:

- Ensure surfaces such as parking lots, walkways, interior hallways are smooth and free of incline or barriers.
- Install accessibility features that respond to a myriad of disabilities including visual impairment and neurodivergence.

Sustainability:

- Increase energy efficiency by installing solar panels on the exterior building addition, opening the roof above the front of the Centre and embrace other approaches that will reduce energy use and increase the benefits of passive solar design.
- Install a green roof and/or a rainwater harvesting system that collects rainwater runoff from roof structures into a rain barrel that can be used for irrigation.

Design and Development Phase:

Staff are recommending that the business case be received and to move immediately to the detailed design phase. This is a critical stage that involves multiple steps to ensure that the project is successfully executed and includes the following:

- i) **Further refinement of Needs:** The first step is for the project team to work with the architect, taking the results of the business case and refining the **critical and priority items** for a successful expansion, that best meets the needs of the community, and considering project limitations, such as site constraints and budget.
- ii) **Concept Development:** Based on the refined needs, the design team will develop conceptual designs that outline the proposed changes to the community centre. These designs will consider factors such as space planning, accessibility, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness.
- iii) **Detailed Project Budgeting:** Once the conceptual designs are determined, a detailed budget, that outlines the cost of the project is developed which includes estimates for construction, materials, equipment, and labour.

The proposed renovation and expansion of the MCCC, as outlined in the business case, has been estimated to cost \$6,063,100, which includes **all** design elements that were identified in the business case as well as contingencies and escalations. Staff are confident that they can work with the project team, including representatives from the Neighbourhood Associations and the architect, to identify and **prioritize the critical**

components from the business case and develop a program with a scope that aligns with the available project budget of \$4,498,670. If after refining the needs and budget estimate, it is found that there are **critical components** that can not be met within the current budget, staff will bring back details for council to make a decision.

- iv) **Permitting and Approvals:** The next step is to obtain the necessary permits and approvals. This may involve obtaining building permits, zoning approvals, and environmental permits etc.
- v) **Detailed Design:** With the necessary approvals, the design team will then proceed to develop detailed designs that include technical drawings, specifications, and schedules. These documents will guide the construction process and ensure that the project is completed to the required standards.
- vi) **Construction:** Including documentation, contractor selection, actual construction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports A Caring Community by starting work on the Mill Courtland Community Centre expansion.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed renovation and expansion of MCCC, as outlined in the business case, has been estimated to cost \$6,063,100. It is important to note that this includes all design elements identified in the business case and is a D class estimate, which includes contingencies and escalations.

The budget allocated for the project is \$4,498,670. During the design and development phase, staff will work with the project team, including the Neighbourhood Associations and the architect, to **prioritize the critical components** from the business case and develop a program with a scope that aligns with the available budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – Information pertaining to the proposed expansion was made available on the City of Kitchener’s website, stakeholder meetings and public events.

CONSULT – The Mill Courtland Community Centre equitable engagement activities include: place-based storytelling; two public surveys; 10+ organizational stakeholder interviews; three site assessments (including University of Waterloo Students); community-led Neighbourhood Walk; equitable community engagement training delivered to City staff and Neighbourhood Associations members; one participatory open house and informal conversations.

APPROVED BY: Michael May, DCAO Community Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Mill Courtland Community Centre Business Case